

# BOROUGH OF CHARD

## ANNUAL REPORT

OF

### THE MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER, 1937.



To the Mayor, Aldermen and Councillors of  
the Borough of Chard.

GENTLEMEN,

I have the honour of presenting my annual report concerning sanitary matters in the Borough. Perhaps a few comments thereon may be permissible. Firstly, although the births during 1937 were somewhat more numerous (58) than for the former seven years, they are still well exceeded by the deaths (63). There is still much room for improvement. Happily, deaths among the children are practically nil, although 3 prematurely born infants survived only a day or two. The deaths were mainly in ripe old age. 4 reached well over 90 years, 13 more from 80 to 90, 21 from 70 to 80. Bar the three attempts at life mentioned, there were no deaths in the first 20 years, and only one in each of the next three ten-year periods. Largely perhaps because we are living to older ages, the proportion of cancer cases increases. The disease is not notifiable, so the number of actual cases is not known, and, more important, the number of cures made. These cases are more numerous than many think, and if only this is realised and action taken at an early stage the number of cures will be greatly increased.

Tuberculosis as a cause of death is much less frequent and the age, even then, a later one usually.

My thanks are tendered to the Borough Surveyor for records re housing, sanitary inspections, &c.

I have the honour to be,  
Your obedient servant,  
R. SUTHERLAND.

May, 1938.

#### SECTION A.

##### STATISTICS AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS OF THE AREA.

Area, 920 Acres.

Registrar-General's estimate of resident population mid 1937, 4,330.

Number of inhabited houses (end of 1937) according to Rate Books, 1,253.

Rateable Value, £24,557.

Sum represented by a penny rate, £94 (estimated).

SOCIAL CONDITIONS.—Very little, if any, change.

There was comparatively little unemployment during the year.

EXTRACTS FROM VITAL STATISTICS OF THE YEAR, after correction for inward and outward transfers, as furnished by the Registrar-General.

Live Births— Total M. F.  
Legitimate ... 51 ... 29 ... 22  
Illegitimate ... 3 ... 2 ... 1

Birth Rate per 1,000 of the estimated resident population :

Still Births—  
Legitimate ... 3 ... 1 ... 2  
Illegitimate ... Nil ... — ... —

Rate per 1,000 total (live and still births).

Deaths	...	...	63	...	27	...	36
Death rate per 1,000 of the estimated resident population, 14.55.							

NOTE.—For comparison with Death Rate of England and Wales the above death rate is multiplied by a comparability factor, and thus becomes 11.20.

Deaths from puerperal causes	..	0	
Puerperal Sepsis	..	0	
Other puerperal causes	..	0	
Total	..	..	0

Rate per 1,000 (live and still) births, nil.

Death rate of Infants under one year of age :—

All infants per 1,000 live births	...	55.55	
Legitimate infants per 1,000 legitimate live births	..	..	58.82
Illegitimate infants per 1,000 illegitimate live births	..	..	nil

Deaths from Cancer	(all ages)	11
Measles	" ..	nil
Whooping Cough	" ..	nil
Diarrhoea (under 2 years of age)	..	nil

There was an outbreak of dysentery in the Borough associated with one in the neighbouring districts in May and June, an account of which has already been given by the County Medical Officer of Health in conjunction with the local Medical Officers, and need not be further reported here. There were no deaths from it.

The Registrar-General divides the causes of death in the country into 36 categories. 1 Typhoid and Paratyphoid; 2 Measles; 3 Scarlet Fever; and so on. In Nos. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 17, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 29, 30, 33, 34, and 36 there were no deaths. In the omitted numbers the deaths were as follows :—

Nos. (6)	Influenza	Male	Female
(9)	Tuberculosis of Resp. System	.. 1	2
(13)	Cancer	.. 7	4
(14)	Diabetes	.. 0	1
(15)	Cerebral Hem., &c.	2	0
(16)	Heart Diseases	.. 1	11
(18)	Other circulatory diseases	.. 1	1
(19)	Bronchitis	.. 2	2
(20)	Pneumonia	.. 1	0
(21)	Other resp. diseases	1	0
(22)	Peptic Ulcer	.. 2	0
(28)	Ascites and Chronic Nephritis	.. 0	1
(31)	Congenital Debility, Preni. Birth, &c.	1	2
(32)	Senility	.. 6	8
(35)	Other defined diseases	1	2
		Totals	.. 27 36—63

#### SECTION B.

##### GENERAL PROVISION OF HEALTH SERVICES FOR THE AREA.

- 1 Public Health Officers of the Authority : Medical Officer of Health, ROBERT SUTHERLAND, M.B., Ch.B. Vict. Part time only.

2 Sanitary Inspector, P. H. WEBB, M.Inst. M. & Cv. E. Part time only.

Assistant Sanitary Inspector, A. L. LARCOMBE. Part time only.

There are no changes to be recorded re laboratory facilities, ambulance, nursing in the homes, clinics and treatment centres or hospitals.

#### SECTION C.

##### SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE AREA.

1 (i) WATER. The public supply has continued to be abundant in quantity and excellent in quality. Works inspected on 72 occasions. The latest report, 10/2/38, from the Somerset County Laboratory, of the two wells supplying the Borough, says :— "The above sample shows no evidence of contamination and the results are satisfactory." Usually examined by County about twice yearly but now to be quarterly.

(ii) DRAINAGE AND SEWERAGE.—No alteration.

2 RIVERS AND STREAMS.—No special action taken.

3 (i) CLOSET ACCOMMODATION.—No special alteration.

(ii) PUBLIC CLEANSING.—No alteration.

(iii) SANITARY INSPECTIONS OF THE AREA.

Re Sewerage and Drainage	...	139
Inspection for nuisances	...	27
Informal notices served	...	29
Drainage tests and inspections	71	
Houses disinfected	...	14
Dairies and Cowsheds	...	26
Water Works Inspections	...	72
Slaughter House Inspections	407	

(iv) SHOPS.—No special action required.

(v) SMOKE ABATEMENT.—No action taken.

(vi) There is a swimming bath belonging to Chard School which is open to the public during the summer holidays at special fees for the session. It is treated chemically by the school authorities as required. No tests of the water have been made by the Sanitary Authority.

##### (vii) ERADICATION OF BED BUGS.

1. No Council houses are infected. A few others have been found to be infested and have been effectually disinfected by spraying with Killgercide.

2. Precautions taken to prevent infestation of Council Houses by belongings of incoming tenants.

3. Several supervisions.

4. By whom disinfection has been done, by Local Authority.

5. Preventive measures taken. General supervision.

4. SCHOOLS.—Their sanitary conditions are very good. The public elementary school teachers have special instructions from the County M.O.H. as to reporting, &c., in case of infectious disease.

## MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH'S REPORT—Continued.

### SECTION D.

#### HOUSING.

##### NUMBER OF HOUSES ERECTED DURING THE YEAR :—

###### (i) By Local Authority.

###### With State Assistance :

(a) Rehousing under Housing Act, 1936 .. .	24
(b) Overcrowding. Started, not complete .. .	24
(c) Other .. .	nil

###### Without State Assistance :

###### (ii) By other bodies or persons.

(a) With State Assistance ..	nil
(b) Without State Assistance ..	9

##### HOUSING INSPECTIONS :—

1. (a) Total number of dwelling-houses inspected for housing defects (under Public Health or Housing Acts) .. .	42
(b) Number of inspections made for the purpose .. .	127
2. (a) Number of dwelling-houses (included under Sub-head (1) above) which were inspected and recorded under the Housing Consolidated Regulations, 1925 .. .	18
(b) Number of inspections made for the purpose .. .	41
3. Number of dwelling-houses found to be in a state so dangerous or injurious to health as to be unfit for human habitation .. .	12
4. Number of dwelling-houses (exclusive of those referred to under the preceding sub-head) found not to be in all respects reasonably fit for human habitation .. .	6

##### HOUSING ACTION :

Number of defective dwelling-houses rendered fit in consequence of *informal* action by the Local Authority or their Officers .. . 5

##### ACTION UNDER STATUTORY POWERS DURING THE YEAR :—

###### A. PROCEEDINGS UNDER SECTIONS 9, 10 AND 16 OF THE HOUSING ACT, 1936 :

(1) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which notices were served requiring repairs .. .	5
(2) Number of dwelling-houses which were rendered fit after service of formal notice.	
(a) By owners .. .	5
(b) By local authority in default of owners .. .	nil

###### B. PROCEEDINGS UNDER PUBLIC HEALTH ACTS :—

(1) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which notices were served requiring defects to be remedied .. .	19
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(2) Number of dwelling-houses in which defects were remedied after service of formal notices :	
(a) By owners .. .	19
(b) By local authority in default of owners .. .	nil

###### C. PROCEEDINGS UNDER SECTIONS 11, 13 AND 26 OF THE HOUSING ACT, 1936 :

(1) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which Demolition Orders were made .. .	nil
(2) Number of dwelling houses demolished in pursuance of Demolition Orders .. .	7
(3) Clearance Orders made ..	nil
(4) Clearance Orders confirmed ..	nil
(a) Number of houses involved ..	nil
(b) Number of houses demolished .. .	nil

##### HOUSING ACT, 1936 — OVERTRODING :—

(a) (i) Number of dwellings overcrowded at the end of the year ..	22
(ii) Number of families dwelling therein .. .	22
(iii) Number of persons dwelling therein .. .	131
(b) Number of new cases of over-troding reported during the year ..	3
(c) (i) Number of cases of over-troding relieved during the year .. .	4
(ii) Number of persons concerned in such cases .. .	29

### SECTION E.

#### INSPECTION AND SUPERVISION OF FOOD.

(a) Milk Supply. Regular inspections of farms and dairies .. .	26
(b) Meat and other foods. Slaughter-house inspections .. .	407

##### Carcasses Inspected and Condemned.

Number killed, not known.

Number inspected :	
Cattle, excluding cows .. .	458
Cows .. .	151
Calves .. .	91
Sheep and Lambs .. .	729
Pigs .. .	818

All diseases except Tuberculosis.

Whole carcases condemned :

Cattle, excluding cows .. .	nil
Cows .. .	1
Pigs .. .	2

Carcasses of which some part or organ was condemned :

Cattle, excluding cows .. .	2
Cows .. .	7
Calves .. .	2
Sheep and Lambs .. .	34
Pigs .. .	7

Tuberculosis only.

Whole carcases condemned :

Pigs .. .	5
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Carcasses of which some part or organ was condemned :

Cattle, excluding cows .. .	1
Cows .. .	13
Calves .. .	1
Pigs .. .	32

- (c) Adulteration, etc. No local action.
- (d) Chemical and bacteriological examination of food. No local action.

- (e) Nutrition. No official action taken to increase knowledge re importance of adequate diets, etc., by lectures or films.

- (f) (i) Shellfish. There are no beds or layings of beds of these in the area.
- (ii) Although oysters and cockles are occasionally marketed in the district, no official enquiries have been made as to their source.

### SECTION F.

#### PREVALENCE OF AND CONTROL OVER INFECTIOUS AND OTHER DISEASES.

There has been very little notifiable disease in the area during the year, but influenza and colds have been much as usual.

No official action has been taken to provide artificial immunisation against diphtheria, scarlet fever, measles, etc., or for the supply of measles serum.

##### NOTIFIABLE DISEASES

(other than tuberculosis) :

Small pox, scarlet fever, diphtheria, enteric fever (including para-typhoid) nil

##### Pneumonia :

Total cases notified .. . 4  
Ages .. . 4, 34, 56 and 56

Cases admitted to hospital .. . nil

Deaths .. . 1

##### Puerperal Pyrexia :

Total cases notified .. . 1  
Age .. . 37

Cases admitted to hospital .. . mil

Deaths .. . nil

##### Erysipelas :

Total cases notified .. . 2  
Ages .. . 46 and 53

Cases admitted to hospital .. . nil

Deaths .. . nil

##### Dysentery :

Total cases notified .. . 10

Mostly in childhood.

Cases admitted to hospital .. . mil

Deaths .. . mil

##### 4 (a) PREVENTION OF BLINDNESS.

No local official action taken.

##### (b) TUBERCULOSIS.

No local official compulsion action required re infectious

persons dangerous to the public.